fishing community engaged in sea fishing using mechanised boats can not do fishing throughout the year owing to the shortage of kerosene in Kerala due to insufficient allotment of kerosene to the State: and

(b) whether Government will review the quota of ker ene to the State keeping in mind the genuine need to fishermen community?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) The Central Government makes only bulk allocation of kerosene to the States/UTs. Its retail distribution to different sections of the community in different areas within the State is the responsibility of the State Government.

Allocation of kersosene is made on historical basis, i.e., past year's supplies plus additional allocation out of increase given at national level. Kerosene is a deficit product and more than 40% of our requirements are met through imports. Requests are received from State Governments for additional allocation of kerosene from time to time. However, on account of constraints of product availability, foreign exchange and heavy subsidy involved, it is not possible to meet fully such demands always; possible increase, however, is given, out of the additional availability at the country level, in accordance with a formula, under which higher allocation, out of additional quantity, is given to States with lower per capita availability, so as to reduce inter-State disparity over a period of time. Accordingly, an increase of 3.61% has been made in the allocation of kerosene to Kerala for the year 1998-99. This increase amounts to an additional quantity of 10466 MTs. The State Government may meet the requirements of the fishermen community from this additional quantity.

Oil Exploration Projects in North-Eastern Region

4108. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the present status of oil exploration projectss in the North-Eastern region;

(b) how many new projects have been sanctioned during the last three years;

(c) what are the reassons for poor response of private sector participation in oil exploration in the North-Eastern region; and

(d) the details of steps taken to attract more private investment in oil exploration in the North-Eastern region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (d) Currently ONGC is carrying out exploratory drilling and seismic surveys in the States of Assam (Lower Assam region) and Tripura. OIL is carrying out similar activity in the State of Assam (Upper Assam) and Arunachal Pradesh. In addition to the exploration activities of ONGC and OIL, Government of India has also awarded contracts for exploration of oil and gas for seven blocks in the North-Eastern Region, of which contracts have already been signed for three blocks in Assam-Arakan basin. Contracts have also been awarded for development of a medium-sized field Kharsang in Arunachal Pradesh and a small-sized field Amguri in Assam.

In order to give a boost to the exploration and production of hydrocarbons in the country including the North-Eastern Region, Government has announced a liberal New Exploration Licencing Policy. This provides inter-alia a tax holiday for seven years after commencement of commercial production from the fields and exemption from payment of signature, discovery or production bonus and cess.

गुजरात तेलशोधक कारखाने की विद्युत उत्पादन परियोजना की स्थिति

4109. श्री अनन्तराव देवशंकर दवे: क्या पैट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) गुजरात तेलशोधक कारखाने की विद्युत उत्पादन परियोजना की वर्तमान स्थिति क्या है;

(ख) क्या इस परियोजना में कुछ अड़चने हैं;